Managing Sediment Traps and Septic Tank Waste

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Sediment Traps
Many automotive facilities and other businesses have *catch basins* or sediment traps that separate grit and debris from wastewater before it is discharged to a municipal sewer or a septic system. The grit and debris removed from these traps must be considered a solid waste. As such, you should also make a determination whether or not this solid waste is a hazardous waste. If it is not a hazardous waste then you must follow solid waste regulations in managing and disposing of the waste.

However, if the grit is a Hazardous waste, all the Resource Conservation Recovery Act (P,CP,A) requirements under NR 600 series Wis. Adm. Code apply if you are using best management practices and waste minimization pollution prevention practices you can often keep sediment trap wastes from becoming hazardous wastes

For example, if the trap is in a bay that is solely used for washing vehicles, you are managing car wash grit. This waste contains oils and grease, but not usually other heavy metals or organic solvents. The waste must be dewatered and taken to a licensed solid waste landfill. This waste has also been accepted at asphalt plants since it is very sandy and contains small gravel. Usually traps are pumped by septage haulers. This practice is fine, but the waste cannot be landspread since it is not septage and has no soil enhancement potential. There are not many pumpers who are capable of correctly dewatering grit, therefore generators should be careful who they hire for this work.

If the trap is in a maintenance bay or body shop where there is direct access to the trap for all the work activities around it, the sediment should be analyzed for the compounds used nearby that are on the RCRA Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) list. For example, at a body shop where overspray, sanding debris, cleaning solvents, etc., are clearly getting into the trap, the sediment should probably be analyzed for lead, cadmium, chromium and perhaps some volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Which tests to run can be determined using the material safety data sheets for the products in use.

If the shop is using best management and waste minimization practices, then there may be a basis for using generator knowledge to determine that the waste from their traps is nonhazardous. These practices include but are not limited to, sweeping the floor before washing dust into the drain, having absorbents on hand to quickly absorb spills before they reach the drain, and using products with no or low VOC's and metals. Once again, the waste must be dewatered and sent to a licensed solid waste landfill and must not be landspread.

Always know how your waste is being managed and where it is going, because you as the generator, are responsible. Get receipts that show where your waste was disposed. Maintain these records.

Businesses can contact their local DNR hazardous waste specialist or business sector specialist for more information.

Septic Tanks and Septage
All businesses that are on septic systems should be aware that only their sanitary waste can go to a soil absorption field unless they have a Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit for the disposal of commercial and industrial waste. The alternative is to have a holding tank for business waste. Arrangements must then be made to take this waste to a wastewater treatment plant. Once again this waste is not a septage and cannot be landspread. Get receipts and maintain records of disposal. There may be other alternatives for these wastes. You should contact your local wastewater specialist for help. The University of

Wisconsin Extension's Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center can also provide excellent information on waste minimization and pollution prevention techniques.

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